

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 431

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2090

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, ENRG, PFOR, BG, UR

SUBJ: SOVIET DEPUTY MINISTER VISITS BANGLADESH

REF: DACCA A-128, DECEMBER 12, 1975

1. N.D. MALTSEV, SOVIET DEPUTY MINISTER FOR ENERGY AND ELECTRIFICATION, ACCOMPANIED BY N.G. SUDARIKOV, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND A.V. EROFEEV, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, ALL UNION FOREIGN TRADE ORGANIZATIONS (ALSO IDENTIFIED BY SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS AS TECHROPROMEXPORT), VISITED BANGLADESH FROM APRIL 8 TO 15, 1976, TO INAUGURATE THE SOVIET-FINANCED AND BUILT GHORASAL THERMAL ELECTRIC POWER PLANT. THIS WAS THE HIGHEST-LEVEL SUCH SOVIET VISIT SINCE 1973

2. FUNCTIONS/EVENTS. IN ADDITION TO INAUGURATING, WITH DCMLA ADMIRAL M.H. KHAN, THE 110-MW GHORASAL POWER PLANT APRIL 10, MALTSEV CALLED ON PRESIDENT SAYEM AND DCMLA GENERAL ZIA, MET WITH HAFIZUDDIN, INDUSTRIES MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF ADVISORS, AND BDG POWER DEVELOPMENT BOARD OFFICIALS, VISITED KAPTAI ON THE KARNAPHULI RIVER, THE SOVIET-FINANCED AND BUILT GENERAL ELECTRIC MANUFACTURING PLANT AT CHITTAGONG, AND THE BEACH AT COX'S BAZAR. THE SOVIET ENERGY

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GROUP WAS GIVEN A DINNER BY ADMIRAL KHAN, ATTENDED BY GENERAL ZIA.

(THE SOVIET EMBASSY PRESS RELEASE CONCERNING THE INAUGURATION
FOLLOWS BYQ POUCH.)

3. FARAKKA. THE BANGLADESH FAILED TO DRAW THE DEPUTY MINISTER OUT
ON FARAKKA, ALTHOUGH THE EFFECTS OF THE INDIAN DIVERSION OF GANGES
WATERS THERE WAS THE MAIN SUBJECT OF ADMIRAL KHAN'S AFTER DINNER
STATEMENT. ACCORDING TO THE SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS, MALTSEV DURING
HIS WEEK-LONG VISIT OFFERED ONLY ONE TECHNICAL COMMENT CONCERNING
TREATMENT OF INDUSTRIAL SEWAGE AFFECTED BY SALINITY* THE PAPERS
CARRIED NOTHING WE SAW CONCERNING FARAKKA ATTRIBUTED TO MALTSEV.
(BUT SEE ALSO PARA 4.)

4. SOVIET VIEW. IN COMMENTING TO AMBASSADOR ON MATSEV'S VISIT,
SOVIET AMBASSADOR STEPANOV SAID THAT, WHILE MALTSEV'S PRIMARY
PURPOSE IN COMING TO DACCA HAD BEEN TO INAUGURATE THE GHORASAL
POWER STATION, HIS VISIT ALSO HAD SOME POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE AS
AN EXPRESSION OF SOVIET GOODWILL TOWARDS BANGLADESH. NOTING THAT
MALTSEV HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT SAYEM, GENERAL ZIA, AND OTHER
SENIOR BDG OFFICIALS, AMBASSADOR STEPANOV SAID THAT MALTSEV HAD
BEEN ASSURED AT HIGHEST LEVELS OF BDG'S DESIRE FOR FRIENDLY RELATIONS
WITH SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND THIS THOUGHT HAD BEEN RECIPROCATED
BY SOVIET SIDE. AMBASSADOR STEPANOV ALSO NOTED THAT BDG LEADERSHIP
HAD EXPRESSED ITS INTENTION TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH INDIA
AND HAD INDICATED THEY WOULD HOLD TALKS TOWARD THAT END IN THE
NEAR FUTURE (OBVIOUSLY THE FARAKK BARRAGE-RELATED TALKS).

5. COMMENT. ACTION BY THE SOVIETS TO TRANSLATE THEIR EXPRESSIONS
OF GOODWILL INTO NEW (OR EVEN REVIVED) ECONOMIC AND MILITARY
ASSISTANCE WILL BE THE BEST TEST OF ANY CHANGED SOVIET ATTITUDE
TOWARD BANGLADESH. SINCE THE AUGUST 15 COUP, ALREADY PROGRAMMED
ASSISTANCE HAS GROUND TO A HALT (SEE REPAIR) AND THIS DEVELOPMENT
WAS SEEN BY BANGLADESHIS AS AN EXPRESSION OF SOVIET DISPLEASURE AT
BOTH THE SHEIKH'S FALL FROM POWER AND BANGLADESH'S LOOSENING OF ITS
TIES WITH INDIA. THE ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING THE MALTSEV VISIT WOULD
SEEMD TO SUGGEST SOME SMALL THAWING, BUT IS IN DECIDED CONTRAST TO
SUCH CHILLY SOVIET VIEWS AS WERE DESCRIBED IN MOSCOW 4858.
BOSTER

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